



## City of Gaithersburg Press Release

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### For Immediate Release

## Popular Skywatching Programs Return to Observatory Park

**Gaithersburg, MD (April 17, 2019)** – The City of Gaithersburg invites you to turn your eyes skyward during a series of Skywatching programs at Observatory Park, 100 DeSellum Avenue. It's an especially exciting season, with some of the programs focused on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of man's first steps on the moon. Admission for all programs is free and they are suitable for all ages.

Some accessible parking for those with disability plates or placards is available by the park, with general parking in the St. Martin's lot at the corner of DeSellum Avenue and Route 355 (a two-block walk) unless otherwise noted\*. Enter the lot on DeSellum Avenue. Note that there are no amenities nor running water at Observatory Park, and alcohol is prohibited.

**Spring Astronomy Week** kicks off with a special event on Saturday, May 11, 2019, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. The evening will feature live music with the Secret Society of Science Song Writers of Northwest High School, hands-on activities and telescope viewing. Bring your own telescope for one-on-one help with our experts, or learn how to use one that is provided. If you plan on bringing your telescope, please let the Community Museum know what type and make by May 5 so volunteers can be better prepared to help you. Call 301-258-6160 or e-mail [museum@gaithersburgmd.gov](mailto:museum@gaithersburgmd.gov).

### Latitude Observatory Turns 120

#### **Sunday, June 30, Noon – 4 p.m.**

Gaithersburg's International Latitude Observatory turns 120! Celebrate with activities related to the geodetic science that was conducted at the Observatory and enjoy a special birthday cake at 1 p.m. Participate in tours of the Park and Observatory, hands-on activities and more. The National Geodetic Survey (part of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the agency that first had oversight of the Observatory) will be on site with educational displays and hands-on activities. This program is part of Montgomery County Heritage Days.

*\* Field parking at St. Martin's is not available during this event. Parking is available in Olde Towne and at the Activity Center (about ¼ mile away). Please be considerate of street parking within the neighborhood.*

### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lunar Landing

#### **Saturday, July 20, 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.**

Commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Apollo 11 landing on the Moon with hands-on activities, telescope viewing, and more.

### **Moon Movie Fest & a Show (Perseids Meteor Shower)**

**Saturday, August 10, 9 p.m. – 1 a.m.**

The first ever movie night at Observatory Park features *The Dish* (PG13), a true (and amusing) tale about how man's first steps on the moon were broadcast on Earth. Stay afterwards for a viewing of the Perseids Meteor Shower. While not at its peak, there should still be plenty of shooting stars to see during this event.

### **International Observe the Moon Night**

**Saturday, October 5, 6 – 8 p.m.**

Join astronomy enthusiasts all over the world in observing the Moon and take part in hands-on activities and tours of the Observatory.

### **Saturn & Planetary Nebulae**

**Saturday, October 26, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

Join astronomy enthusiasts all over the world in observing Saturn and Planetary Nebulae. Take part in hands-on activities and tours of the Observatory. We will be looking at Saturn and for one of the visible nebula in the Milky Way.

*\* Field parking at St. Martin's is not available during this event. Parking is available in Olde Towne and at the Activity Center (about ¼ mile away). Please be considerate of street parking within the neighborhood.*

Please note these events may be cancelled or modified due to inclement or cloudy weather. Visit [www.facebook.com/GaithersburgCommunityMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/GaithersburgCommunityMuseum) for updates and last-minute announcements.

Observatory Park will be dark, but please do not bring a bright flashlight; bring a red light as it will be less intrusive to other watchers. Also, adjust the brightness of electronic devices.

[Observatory Park](#) is home to the [Gaithersburg International Latitude Observatory](#). Operating from 1899 to 1982, the Observatory was one of six worldwide that measured the wobble of the earth on its polar axis leading to improved navigation and scientific discovery. This outdoor interpretive space highlights the importance of the scientific work conducted here for nearly a century. For more information, visit [www.gaithersburgmd.gov](http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov) or call 301-258-6160.

Some of the [Gaithersburg Community Museum](#) skywatching and educational programs are supported by The Explore Science: Earth & Space project, led by the Science Museum of Minnesota, in collaboration with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Explore Science: Earth & Space toolkits are developed and distributed nationwide by the National Informal STEM Education Network (NISE Net). The National Informal STEM Education Network (NISE Network) is a national community of informal educators and scientists dedicated to fostering public awareness, engagement and understanding of current science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). For more information about NISE Net and to download a digital Explore Science: Earth & Space toolkit please visit: [www.nisenet.org](http://www.nisenet.org).

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